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Senator Rodríguez's Statement on El Paso Electric Company's 2017 Rate Case

Austin – Senator José Rodríguez released the following statement regarding the rate case filed by the El Paso Electric Company earlier today. The new rate case includes solar provisions substantially similar to those in its 2015 rate case. Sen. Rodríguez was outspoken in his opposition to those provisions* and has similar concerns regarding the solar provisions in the newly-announced rate case.

I'm disappointed that El Paso Electric insists on discouraging people from installing solar on their homes. The electric company once again wants to single out solar customers by increasing their rates at least two times the amount of their non-solar neighbors. Solar customers will no longer be able to save on their electric bills, which was the reason they installed solar panels in the first place. Frankly, the energy bill uncertainty alone will significantly stifle solar; what new customer would install solar panels today if they can't predict what their future energy savings will be, if any? During the last rate case, the company wouldn't even agree to grandfather current solar customers into their current rates. These customers invested in solar expecting to pay for their systems through reduced electric bills. It's just unfair to now unilaterally change the rules for these customers.

I strongly believe these anti-solar proposals contradict the intent of Senate Bill 1910, which I passed in 2011 to authorize solar net metering in El Paso Electric's service territory.

El Paso Electric ignores the positive contributions residential solar brings, like reduced grid demand during sunny months. As solar grows, it could reduce electricity bills for all

ratepayers by reducing the need to construct new, expensive power plants and transmission infrastructure — the costs for which are borne by the ratepayer.

*See e.g., the Senator's letters to City Council dated Nov. 18, 2015

(http://interchange.puc.state.tx.us/WebApp/Interchange/Documents/44941_303_873542.PDF)

and to the Public Utility Commission of Texas, Jan. 22, 2016

(http://interchange.puc.state.tx.us/WebApp/Interchange/Documents/44941_629_879918.PDF)

José Rodríguez represents Texas Senate District 29, which includes the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio. He represents both urban and rural constituencies, and more than 350 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. Senator Rodríguez currently serves as the Chairman of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs (Vice Chair); Natural Resources and Economic Development; Transportation, and Veteran Affairs and Border Security.